

language. I remain concerned, however, that some provisions in H.R. 2830 may create undue burdens and delays which in turn will delay this desperately needed modernization and may ultimately add to the overall costs.

The marine safety components of the underlying bill also cause me concern. Previously, the Commandant announced a number of changes he had directed the Coast Guard to implement regarding marine safety. Under his leadership, the men and women of the Coast Guard continue to examine and improve upon the Coast Guard's marine safety role.

Having served in the Coast Guard and Reserve, I know the armed service is unique because of its structure and flexibility. On a daily basis, Coast Guard men and women focus on drug interdiction, environmental protection, migrant interdiction, port security, search and rescue, homeland security, and maritime safety. Each of these roles, in my opinion, complements the others.

I continue to support efforts to provide stakeholders an opportunity to voice their concerns, provide constructive feedback, and work together to improve the marine safety aspect of the Coast Guard. At the same time, I firmly believe that we should give the Coast Guard the time, opportunity, and resources to improve and expand upon its marine safety efforts prior to congressional intervention.

I am equally concerned the underlying bill lacks provisions that would provide the Coast Guard the authority to protect seafarers who facilitate the Government's ability to investigate and prosecute environmental crimes. This is another example where current law impedes our ability to prosecute criminals.

I'd also like to express my concern with section 720 of the underlying bill which addresses security at liquefied natural gas facilities. Consistently, I have cast votes in favor of legislation which I believe will help to make our Nation energy independent. While there has not been focused attention on LNG, it remains a viable energy alternative. Therefore, I'm concerned by provisions that would designate the Coast Guard as the sole agency responsible for LNG security. In my opinion, this is neither reasonable nor practicable for the Coast Guard or the communities where these facilities currently exist. In my opinion, this provision will act as a barrier to entry for future facilities and result in higher energy prices for consumers. Later today or tomorrow, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting an amendment made in order which would strike this dangerous provision.

Finally, I'd like to address the inclusion of H.R. 2399, the Alien Smuggling and Terrorism Prevention Act. It is my understanding that upon engrossment of H.R. 2830, this language will be included in the underlying bill. I support this action as maritime alien smuggling has become a business where smugglers game the system and have little to lose under the current law. The Coast Guard confronts smugglers on a routine basis who know they can use a lack of authority to their advantage. These kinds of cases are dangerous to our Coast Guard men and women and dangerous to the smuggled aliens and occur at increasing frequency.

This measure is necessary because it provides a tool for the Coast Guard and Department of Justice to ensure the integrity of our maritime borders. Currently, there are enormous procedural and jurisdictional hurdles that

protect and actually embolden alien smugglers. It will begin to deter unsafe and inhumane sea-based smuggling by delivering enhanced consequences to those who flee from or lie to our Federal law enforcement officers. Later today or tomorrow, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Representative LAMAR SMITH, will offer an amendment to clarify this authority. While I support the underlying measure, I believe the Smith amendment augments this provision and merits adoption.

It is my hope that during the amendment process some of my concerns in the underlying bill will be alleviated, but as we speak I cannot support passage of H.R. 2830. That said, I look forward to working with my colleagues as this process moves forward.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy Independence, Mr. MARKEY.

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, from 1995 until 2006, the Republican Party controlled the House of Representatives, and since January of 2001, they've controlled the White House as well. During this period, the leadership of the Republican Party in the Congress and in the White House have pumped literally billions of dollars of unnecessary subsidies into the pockets of Big Oil, tens of billions of dollars.

They voted for royalty-free drilling for the biggest oil companies on offshore public lands. They've opposed all efforts to repeal billions in tax breaks for Big Oil. And in the 12 years they controlled the Congress up until the beginning of last year, they opposed high fuel economy standards for the vehicles which we drive in America so we could back out that oil that we import from the Persian Gulf.

GOP used to stand for "Grand Old Party," but now it stands for "Gas and Oil Party."

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Here's what the President said about giving incentives to Big Oil in 2005. He said, "I will tell you, with \$55 oil, we don't need incentives for the oil and gas companies to explore. There are plenty of incentives for the oil industry." That's George Bush, April 2005 at \$55 a barrel. Today, it's at \$119 a barrel. But the Republicans, you know, they just can't kick a bad habit. Offering subsidies to Big Oil to drill is like subsidizing fish to swim, you just don't need to do it. They have all the incentives which they need right now. So the Democratic Party, assuming office just a year ago, under the leadership of NANCY PELOSI, she said, we're going to put a stop-payment order on these unnecessary subsidies to Big Oil.

Last December, we passed the first increase in fuel efficiency standards in 35 years, increasing it to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. We increased the renewable fuel standard to 36 billion gallons, but the Republican opposition made it impossible for us to take the \$18 billion in excessive and unnecessary tax

breaks away from the oil company and to transfer it to the solar and to the wind and to the renewable energy industry. So we're taking that bill up again this year. The Republicans oppose it. They're saying, keep the tax breaks for Big Oil. Keep them away from the wind and the solar industry.

They have no solutions for the 21st century. They have no plan to wean America off of this increased oil dependency. We have gone up from 27 percent dependency to 61 percent dependency upon imported oil in just the last 20 years. This Republican policy is going to make us less secure, more financially dependent upon the Middle East, and it is going to cause an economic and national security catastrophe for our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 11½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman made his point: Since the Democrat Party has taken over, prices at the pump have skyrocketed.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. This has been an interesting discussion. Oil prices record high, \$119, gas prices, \$11. And is Congress acting? What is on the table here to help Americans for affordable energy? Very little, folks. We're about restricting supply.

Consumers are paying the highest prices. The people in my district, and I'm sure in yours, are struggling to drive long distances. I come from a rural district. People are paying \$20 and \$30 a day to drive to work. They can't afford that. They're struggling now to catch up with their winter heating bills, which were unreasonably high.

Well, who's the bad guy? Who's causing this price rise? Mr. MARKEY from Massachusetts said it's Big Oil because they just charge too much. He also says it's because we're putting 70,000 barrels a day in the SPR. Well, why are oil prices high, folks? It's because this Congress, three decades ago, locked up supply. Look at the red on the map. That's the Outer Continental Shelf. We're the only country in the world who doesn't produce gas and oil there. The only country in the world. There are huge reserves in the Midwest.

This body and the Democrat Party have been talking about locking up the shale rock, there's been legislation to do that, the Roan Plateau, the best gas reserve in the Midwest, locking them up.

They talk about us not being dependent on foreign energy, but everything they're doing makes us dependent on foreign energy, where we have no control. Yes, prices for energy are set on Wall Street. Right or wrong, that's the system. They set the prices. When you lock up supply, if we stopped growing as much corn, prices go up. If you stop making as much steel in this country,